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CONAN THE KING
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Stan Lee PRESENTS

# NIGHT WAR

A WINTER'S EVE IN TARANTIA, THE CROWN SEAT OF AQUILONIA...

THIS IS THE NATION'S KING, A BARBARIAN USURPER NAMED CONAN.

THIS IS PROSPERO, CONAN'S CHIEF MILITARY REGENT. HE WANTS TO GO HOME.

ALL RIGHT, PROSPERO...

...OPEN IT UP.

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SOME WEEKS AGO, A LEGION OF STYGIAN DEVIL-PRIESTS INVADED MY LANDS, HERALDING THE ARRIVAL OF A DARK ORACLE.*

THIS ORACLE BROUGHT A WARNING AND A GIFT -- THIS KEY.

IT'S TAKEN MY MEN ALL THIS TIME TO DISCOVER A LOCK THIS KEY ACTUALLY FITS.

HERE... THE TOMB OF NUMEDIDES!

MORE THAN A SCORE YEARS GONE I STRANGLED THE OLD KING OF AQUILONIA AND TOOK HIS CROWN FOR MY OWN.

SINCE THAT TIME HE HAS BEEN SEALED WITHIN THIS CRYPT

THE DEMONIC ORACLE HAS WARNED OF SOME GREAT IMPENDING DOOM THAT THIS KEY WILL SOMEHOW STAVE OFF.

THEREFORE, THERE MUST BE SOMETHING INSIDE NUMEDIDES' TOMB THAT MAY BE USED AS A WEAPON AGAINST WHATEVER EVIL IS TO COME.

WONDERFUL.

CONAN, IT'S COLD OUT HERE. WOULD YOU MIND JUST GETTING ON WITH IT?!

*CTK#50. --DON

NO STOMACH FOR CEREMONY, EH, PROSPERO?

I *KNEW* THERE WAS SOMETHING I LIKED ABOUT YOU.

HERE, BOY.

OPEN IT.

:UGHNN!:

A THOUSAND PARDONS, MY LORD--IT WILL NOT TURN--!

CROM...

...MUST I DO *EVERYTHING* MYSELF?!

THWANNG!

OF WHAT USE IS MY HAVING AN AUDIENCE...

...OR GIVING A *SPEECH*...

...WHEN *ALONE* I COULD HAVE--

KRAAKK!

--BROKEN THE KEY, "SIRE"?

PROSPERO, I *HATE* IT WHEN YOU CALL ME "SIRE."

COMING FROM YOU, IT SOUNDS LIKE AN INSULT.

CROM AND MITRA...

UGHHHNN!

KLAATCH!

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT "*MY LIEGE*"--?

BAH.

YOU MEN WAIT OUTSIDE.

I'LL CHECK THINGS OUT FIRST.

ALTHOUGH A TYRANT, NUMEDIDES WAS LOVED BY A GREAT MANY AQUILONIANS. HIS ABRUPT IMPEACHMENT AT CONAN'S HANDS WAS NOT UNIVERSALLY WELL-RECEIVED.

THUS IT DID BEHOOVE THE CIMMERIAN TO CONSTRUCT THIS SHRINE TO THE OLD KING.

AS HE PASSES, CONAN NOTES THE DREAD HORROR OF THE STONE RELIEFS THAT POPULATE THE TOMB.

HE WONDERS HOW THE DEAD KING CAN REST WITH ANY MEASURE OF PEACE AT ALL.

THEN AGAIN, CONAN NEVER LIKED THE OLD DOG ANYWAY. HE ASSUMES NUMEDIDES NOW WANDERS ARALU'S HALLS, A BROKEN, ROTTING, TORTURED WRETCH, WAILING THE SIREN SONG OF THE ETERNALLY CONDEMNED.

'TWAS NEVER CONAN'S INTENT TO GRANT HIS PREDECESSOR ANY MEASURE OF PEACE.

THE GOBLINS AND GARGOYLES WERE SPECIFICALLY COMMISSIONED BY CONAN FOR A PURPOSE...

...TO KEEP PRYING EYES AND INQUISITIVE MINDS OUT OF THIS CHAMBER!

THE RUNES ON NUMEDIDES' SARCOPHAGUS READ: "WHOSOEVER DISTURBS THE RESTING KING SHALL INCUR THE WRATH OF SET!"

A MOST GRAVE WARNING.

AS WELL IT SHOULD BE, AFTER ALL, CONAN PAID ENOUGH GOLD FOR IT.

ALL HIS YEARS OF ROBBING TEMPLES AND BATTLING SORCERERS TAUGHT CONAN THE VALUE OF SUCH MELODRAMATIC INSCRIPTIONS.

THE "WRATH OF SET" INDEED.

EVEN THE DREAD SERPENT GOD WOULD HAVE NO TRUCK WITH THIS FELLOW...

...NUMEDIDES, DEAD AND GONE.

AND SOMEWHERE WITHIN THIS TOMB IS A WEAPON FORGED FOR CONAN'S USE AGAINST AN AS YET UNSEEN FOE.

CONAN'S MEN WILL SEARCH THIS TOMB FROM TOP TO BOTTOM. THAT IS WHY HE INSISTED ON ENTERING FIRST...

...SO HE COULD RETRIEVE THIS.

THE ELABORATE FAUX-SORCEROUS TRAPPINGS INSTALLED WITHIN THIS CRYPT WERE ALL DESIGNED TO SAFE-GUARD CONAN'S CHOSEN HIDING PLACE FOR THIS BOOK.

IT HAS BEEN HERE FOR NEARLY TWO-SCORE YEARS.

NOW HE MUST FIND SOME OTHER PLACE TO HIDE IT.

I'VE CHECKED THE CRYPT, IT LOOKS SAFE.

YOU MEN CAN SEARCH THE TOMB, NOW.

OH, JOY.

PROSPERO, *MUST* YOU MAKE SOME SARCASTIC REMARK BEHIND EACH OF MY ORDERS?!

YES.

ZANDRA?! *ZANDRA*?!

*ZANDRA?* BLAST IT, WOMAN, WHERE *ARE* YOU?!

I *THINK* THIS IS WHERE SHE SAID HER *NEW* COTTAGE WAS LOCATED--

A VOICE I HEARD AND SO IT *IS!* *DARKEYES* HIMSELF, COME TO CALL!

AND A STYGIAN FRIEND DOES YOUNG DARKEYES BRING WITH HIM THIS TIME!

I FOUND THIS BOY WANDERING THE CASTLE GROUNDS, ZANDRA. HE'S NOT MUCH ON CONVERSATION.

I'VE TOLD HIM YOU ARE MY *TUTOR* IN THE SORCEROUS ARTS... THAT *YOU* ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACCURSED GOAT'S FOOT I'M FORCED TO HOBBLE ON. *

*SEE CTK #24. --DON

A SILENT ONE, IS HE?

WELL, LOOK HERE, YELLOW HAIR FROM STYGIA--

--THERE BE A *DRAGON* IN YOUR EAR!

THWACK

WHAT'S WRONG, YELLOW-HAIR, DO YOU NOT LIKE MY--

--MY--

OUT WITH YOU.

DARKEYES SHALL JOIN YOU MOMENTARILY.

ZANDRA--YOU'RE THROWING HIM OUT BECAUSE HE DIDN'T LIKE YOUR STUPID TRICK--?

DARKEYES--THE YELLOW-HAIR WEARS THE *RING*, BOY!

THE SERPENT RING OF *THOTH-AMON*!!

THOUGH SURE AM I YELLOW-HAIR IS NOT HIMSELF THE DREADED MAGE!

SEND HIM *AWAY*, DARKEYES, AS YOU SHOULD NOT WANT YELLOW-HAIR TO BE ANYWHERE NEAR YOU WHEN THOTH-AMON COMES TO *RECLAIM* THAT WHICH IS HIS!!

HMNO, BACK IN TARANTIA...

SINCE THE KING'S VISIT TO KHITAI SHALL TAKE HIM AWAY FROM THE PALACE FOR MORE THAN THREE SEASONS, I BELIEVE THE TIME IS NOW RIPE TO *DECORATE* THIS SQUALID THRONE ROOM.

BUT, *BARON MALORIC*, THE KING SPECIFICALLY COMMISSIONED THIS DECOR--

YES, YES, YES.

DO IT ANYWAY

A JEST, YES?

AFRAID NOT--

FOR MANY LONG SEASONS, BARON MALORIC HAS PLOTTED AGAINST CONAN'S THRONE. TO MALORIC, THIS KHITAI TRIP IS A GIFT FROM THE GODS.

WITH ANY LUCK, CONAN AND KOBE--THE KHITAN WARLORD--WILL KILL EACH OTHER, LEAVING ONLY THE CHILD, TAURUS, BETWEEN MALORIC AND AQUILONIA'S THRONE.

HE'S NEVER LIKED TAURUS.

YOU PRIESTS--WHO THE BLAZES LET YOU INTO THE CASTLE--

--WHAT--HOW DARE YOU?!

DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?!

N-NO--

--NNOOO!!

'UGHNN

HELLO, MALORIC.

I'M BACK

LONG AGO YOU ENLISTED MY AID IN YOUR SCHEME TO STEAL CONAN'S THRONE * SINCE THAT TIME I HAVE OBSERVED YOU CAREFULLY

SOME TIME AGO I LEFT TARANTIA TO SEARCH FOR SOME MISSING PROPERTY OF MINE. I'VE SEARCHED THE WORLD OVER BARON, ONLY TO RETURN EMPTY-HANDED

*SEE CFK #27 FOR DETAILS --DON

AND, ONCE I ARRIVE, I *SMELL* THE PRESENCE OF *ANOTHER SORCERER*... AN *EVIL* CREATURE FROM THE DARK ABYSS!

WHAT DO *YOU* KNOW OF THIS CREATURE'S PRESENCE?

"CHOKE"

!!!

QUICKLY, BARON! AND KNOW THAT YOU TANGLE OVER

...THE *EDGE* OF THE *WORLD!!*

*NOTHING!!* I *KNOW NOTHING* OF ANY WIZARD OR DEMON! I *SWEAR* IT!!

GOOD

I BELIEVE YOU.

I SHALL SPEAK WITH YOU AS SOON AS I DEAL WITH THIS DEMONIC USURPER!

*AAAIIIEEE!*

BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO TO KHITAI, AVARIUS! I LIKE IT HERE

SPLASH

AAAIIIEEE!!

SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THAT MAN

WOW

I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THOTH AMON OTHER THAN THAT HE WAS A POWERFUL SORCERER A DISCIPLE OF SET, OVER [illegible] OF THE STYGIAN BLACK CIRCLE

[illegible] AND [illegible] FATHER CLASHED WHEN I WAS BUT A BABE. THE DARK MAN I MEANT WILLED THE KING

[illegible] NOT CONN, MY ACCURSED OLDER BROTHER INTERVENED AND SAVED HIS LIFE

YOU KNOW, CANDRA THINKS YOU'RE SOME KIND OF DEMON OR [illegible] AGAIN SHE IS QUITE INSANE

[illegible] THOTH AMON [illegible] AND WENT [illegible] THE BEST [illegible]

GHAAAA!!

YOU-- YOU--

YOU ARE SUMP'NIN' DI MON!

WHAT DO YOU! WANT--

NO!!

FATHER-- I GOT TO WARN--

--FATHER!!

DAWN

CONAN

FATHER!!

HUFF!

STYGIAN BOY & RING THOTH

'HUFF HUFF...

...MAGGOTS---!

OF COURSE HIS FATHER DIDN'T BELIEVE HIM!

TAURUS AND HIS FATHER RARELY EVEN SPEAK TO EACH OTHER

TAURUS WONDERS WHY HIS VERY FIRST THOUGHTS WERE FOR HIS FATHER'S SAFETY WHAT EXACTLY DO HIS NATURAL INSTINCTS REVEAL--?

WHA--

--YOU?!

RADEGUND!

MY SISTER! SHE'LL BELIEVE ME--

--AND FATHER WILL LISTEN TO HER!

MOMENTS LATER

NO THAT'S NOT IT

--BLAZES! WHY MUST MOTHER INSIST I LEARN TO PLAY THIS STUPID LUTE?!

I'M TAUGHT TO SEW AND COOK AND CURTSY AND BE SO BLASTED POLITE--

--WHEN I'D MUCH RATHER HAVE A TRY AT FATHER'S SWORD--

RADEGUND!!

THERE'S AN EVIL DEMON POSING AS A YELLOW HAIRED STYGIAN AND HE'S GOT THE SERPENT RING OF THOTH AMON AND IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE AMON RETURNS FOR THE RING AND WE MUST WARN FATHER -

CAN *YOU* EXPLAIN IT TO ME, TAURUS?

--EXPLAIN WHAT?

WHY I'M BEING GROOMED TO SERVE TEA AND BEAR CHILDREN, WHILE EVEN *YOU* ARE BEING PREPARED FOR HAVING A *REAL* LIFE?

BUT--

NO, I DIDN'T *THINK* YOU COULD

OUR TUTOR, *GUIGEMAR*, IS WAITING

MAYBE *HE* CAN MAKE SENSE OF THIS

WHAT THE DEVIL WAS THAT ALL ABOUT--

SCRAPE SCRAPE

EH--?

YIIKKE!

HE TAUNTS ME WITH IMPUNITY?

NOON...

THIS IS A NIGHTMARE.

NO ONE WILL BELIEVE ME--

--THERE! PUBLIUS AND PROSPERO--MY FATHER'S REGENTS! THEY CAN CONVINCE HIM--!

--'TWAS INDEED A TREAT TO SEE MALORIC ALL WET

THE MAN IS A DISGRACE, PUBLIUS

I DON'T KNOW WHY CONAN PUTS UP WITH HIM.

I'VE BEEN ASKED THE SAME THING ABOUT YOU, PROSPERO

CONAN HAS TO PUT UP WITH ME

IT'S IN MY CONTRACT

SIRS! I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU ON A MATTER OF GRAVE IMPORTANCE--!

DO PEOPLE REALLY SAY THAT ABOUT ME--?

AYE..

AND SO...

--SO, TAROUIN, SINCE YOU ARE CAPTAIN OF MY FATHER'S BLACK DRAGONS I FELT IT APPROPRIATE TO INFORM YOU OF--

- OF --

--I'M TALKING TO A BRICK.

GODS, MAN, AT LEAST BLINK EVERY NOW AND THEN

HOURS PASS

I'VE TRIED EVERYONE. EVERYONE. NOT EVEN THE COOAS WILL LISTEN TO ME.

I MUST BE REALLY ROTTEN TO HAVE EARNED THE DISDAIN OF SO MANY PEOPLE. NORMALLY, I'D BE SO PLEASED.

WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO TURNS MY STOMACH.

UNFORTUNATELY, HE'S THE ONLY ONE LEFT--

--BARON MALORIC.

I WOULD SPEAK WITH YOU NOW!

B-BUT, MY LORD PRINCE, THIS IS A SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF BARONS! I COULD NOT--

NOW.

MEETING ADJOURNED

AND AFTER TAURIS HAS TOLD HIS STORY FOR THE THIRTEENTH TIME

--AND SO WE MUST PREVENT FATHER FROM LEAVING FOR KHITAI! ALL MANNER OF HAVOC IS ABOUT TO BREAK LOOSE!

YOU DO BELIEVE ME, DON'T YOU BARON?

YES. YES. IT ALL MAKES SENSE NOW!

HURRY, LAD! WE MUST FIND YOUR FATHER IMMEDIATELY! IF WHAT I SUSPECT IS TRUE--

--THOTH-AMON IS ALREADY HERE!

DUSK.

ALL RIGHT, KOBE, I'LL COME WITH YOU TO KHITAI

TO SETTLE THIS BUSINESS BETWEEN US

AND BRING CONN, YOUR FIRST BORN SON, HOME.

I'M NOT ENTIRELY CONVINCED THAT THE BOY IS STILL ALIVE. MY AGENTS' REPORTS HAVE BEEN INCONCLUSIVE

BUT, IF CONN IS ALIVE, I'LL FIND HIM AND BRING HIM BACK.

THEN THERE SHALL BE PEACE BETWEEN KHITAI AND AQUILONIA.

YOUR ENTOURAGE HAS JOINED WITH MY NATION, WHICH IS ENCAMPED LEAGUES SOUTH OF HERE. WE SHALL LINK UP WITH THEM TONIGHT, AND SET OUT IN FORCE AT DAWN

FATHER--!

FORGIVE THIS INTRUSION, LORD--

GROAN!

MUST WE MALORIC?!

AND SO

SEE, FATHER? I WASN'T LYING--

SEARCH THE CASTLE. ALERT THE MILITARY.

CROM'S BONES, BARON

IF YOU CAN'T HOLD YOUR LIQUOR, DON'T DRINK!

DEMONS AND SORCERERS AND SERPENTS.

BAH

NIGHT

IT'S OVER IT'S ALL OVER

HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO BLIND?

MALORIC WITH PROSPERO GONE WITH FATHER, YOU CONTROL THE ARMY!

SUMMON PALLANTIDES..

IT'S TOO LATE TOO LATE

THOTH AMON ALL ALONG IT WAS THOTH-AMON.

WHO? WHAT ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT??

SNAP OUT OF IT MAN--YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOME-THING!

NOTHING NO ONE CAN SAVE US

YOU MAY HAVE A POINT

FATHER!!

MOMENTS LATER

ALL RIGHT, KOBE LET'S GO LINK UP WITH YOUR HORDE FOR THE NIGHT. AT DAWN, WE'RE OFF FOR YOUR HOMELAND.

INCIDENTALLY, I DOUBT SEVERAL MONTH'S JOURNEY WITH YOU WILL MAKE ME *LIKE* YOU ANY MORE.

SAVE YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR, LORD KING, YOU'LL *NEED* IT

WE'VE SOME *THIRTY* OFFICIAL RECEPTIONS TO ATTEND BETWEEN HERE AND MY LANDS

AS I RECALL, SOCIAL GATHERINGS ARE THE *BANE* OF YOUR EXISTENCE...

FATHER-- *WAIT!!*

--YOU *CAN'T* LEAVE!!

TAURUS!

YOOPH!

BLAST IT, BOY, CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BUSY?

TAKE YOUR CONCERNS TO YOUR MOTHER

COME ON, KOBE.

M--MOTHER...?

OH NO SHE'S STILL INSIDE THE

..NO

OH, NO

YES YOU INSUFFERABLE DOLT!

ALL THESE MONTHS YOU'VE EMPLOYED NOT JUST *ANY* STYGIAN WIZARD--

--BUT THE *LORD* OF THEM ALL!!

ONCE IN EVERY SEASON THERE COMES ONE TO CHALLENGE MY MIGHT... MY *RIGHT* TO THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF NECROMANCY

THIS DEMON IS SUCH A ONE... A NAMELESS *ROGUE SPIRIT* WHO SOMEHOW LOCATED MY SERPENT RING IN THE BELLY OF A FISH!

IT HAS SINCE WAITED AND PLANNED TO KILL ME AND TAKE MY PLACE AS RIGHTFUL LORD OF THE BLACK CIRCLE

*SEE ISSUE #17 FOR DETAILS. --DON

IT BELIEVES MY SERPENT RING WILL MAKE IT *INVINCIBLE.*

WHAT THE DE-MON FAILS TO REALIZE IS THAT MY RING IS AN EXTENSION OF *MYSELF*.

IT CANNOT BE USED AGAINST ME--

NO-- WAIT-- STOP-- !!

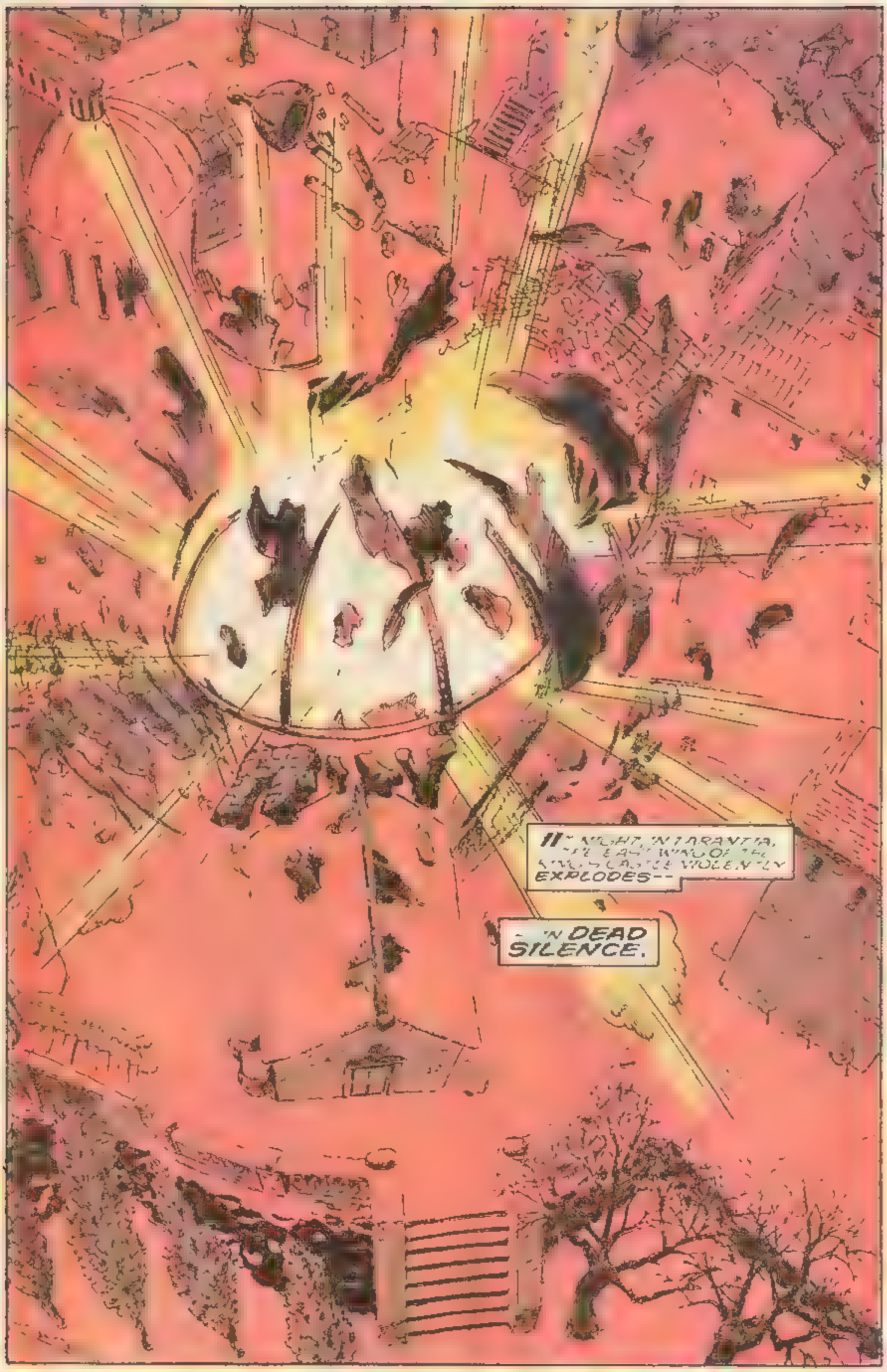
--PLEASE-

NAY TO THE CONTRARY, THE FOOL NOW *FEEDS* MY ELDRITCH POWER INTO THIS MORTAL FRAME!

MY POWER *GROWS*... BLOSSOMING INTO THE *GLORY* THAT ONCE WAS!

TOO LATE DOES THE FOOL REALIZE--

--HIS DOOM IS SEALED!!


IN NIARANTIA, IN THE EAST WING OF THE WHITE CASTLE VIOLENTLY EXPLODES--
IN DEAD SILENCE.

CONAN'S PARTY IS NOW AT LEAST A LEAGUE AND A HALF AWAY, TOO FAR TO HAVE SEEN THE EXPLOSION

THE KING CERTAINLY DID NOT HEAR IT.

AS TAURUS RACES INTO THE DEMOLISHED WING, THE REALIZATION DAWNS ON HIM

HE IS ON HIS OWN.

MOTHER

MOTHER!

MY PRINCE-- DON'T GO IN THERE--!

THE WALLS MAY COLLAPSE FURTHER--

HE DOESN'T CARE

HIS MOTHER AND SISTER ARE YET WITHIN THE CASTLE WALLS

HE WILL FIND THEM, OR DIE TRYING

--EH?

THE DEMON... DEAD... AND WHAT OF THE SORCERER'S RING?

gods--

PRAY WHILE YOU CAN, YOUNG PRINCE.

THOTH-AMON LIVES!

NEXT: THINGS GET WORSE.

# NIGHT HUNT

. . .Thither came CONAN II, Crown Prince of Aquilonia. Estranged from his father and kingdom, he did settle for a time in the eastern kingdom of Khitai.

There did he ally himself with the fractious, tattered, rebel underground which sought to thwart the evil Genjis.

Only one man stood in his way . . . a man whose dark soul knew only a naked lust for power . . .

TSINJE–NUSHAN

Story — A.S. Blaustein
Pencils — Dale Eaglesham
Inks — Pat Redding
Colors — Gregory Wright
Letters — Michael Heisler

SEVEN MOONS HAVE PASSED AND THE GREAT DRAGONS OF THE NORTH HAVE SPEWED FORTH THE BURNING WHITE COLD OF THEIR ELDRITCH FIRE

IT IS WINTER IN THE EASTERN KINGDOM OF KHITAI.

THE HARSH LIGHT OF THE RISING SUN GLINTS BRILLIANTLY OFF THE HEAVILY ARMED WARRIORS AS THEY PACED SLOWLY, METHODICALLY THROUGH THE FRIGID TUNDRA

THEY ARE OUTCASTS REBEL WARRIORS IN SERVICE TO THE DREAD OVERLORD, TSINJE-NUSHAN

THEY HAVE BEEN HUNTING THESE LANDS FOR THIS FOR VERY SPECIAL GAME..

..CONAN, SON OF THE BARBARIAN KING CORIAN!

THEY DO NOT FIND A PRINCE--

INSTEAD THEY FIND GARBAGE...

...HUMAN REFUSE TOSSED ASIDE BY THE IMPERIAL HORDES OF THE YAGYU CLAN.

AS SHOULD BE EXPECTED THE HAPLESS REFUGEES LOOK TO LORD TSINJE FOR AID AND COMFORT

PRAISE THE GODS!

SAVE US GREAT LORD!

THEY ARE FOOLS

TRULY THIS IS A GREAT DAY!

THE GODS HAVE SENT YOU TO OUR SIDE! YOU MAY HELP US TO THE VILLAGE!

WITH YOUR AID WE MAY AT LAST FIND THE TIGER-LORD--THE KIRAKHAN!

KIRAKHAN?

HA! IT IS AN OLD FISHWIFES TALE OF A BARBARIAN HUNTER WHO RESCUES LOST CHILDREN--

--THE SNOW HAS ADDLED THE OLD BEGGARS WITS!

I SEE! I TOO LOOK FOR A LOST CHILD.

-AND IF WE COULD CLEAR THIS MUCK FROM MY PATH--

--I WOULD BE ON MY WAY!

BLAP BLAP

I HAVE NO TIME TO HELP THE LIKES OF YOU!

I CARE NOT FOR YOUR LEGENDS OF A KIRAKHAN, THOUGH YOUR TALK OF A NEARBY VILLAGE INTERESTS ME--

SKREAK

MY MEN HAVE NEED OF PROVISIONS WHICH YOU MAY HAVE HELPED ME ATTAIN

MY THANKS!

CHAK!

NOW MOVE AWAY, YOU PEASANT DUNG HEAPS!

I SAID MOVE!

AND SO

MOVE BACK YOU DOGS! LORD TSINJE WOULD ENTER THIS VILLAGE!

WHAT MANNER OF MEN ARE YOU? WE STAND IN GUARD AGAINST THE HORDES OF GENJIS!

WE ARE MEN!

SPLAK

SKRESH

AS SUCH WE ARE NOT PUPPETS FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF KINGS

I AM TSINJE-NUSHAN!

I SERVE NO MASTER BUT MYSELF!

OUTSIDE THE WALLS, A BATTLE RAGES

INSIDE ALL IS QUIET

INSIDE SMILES BEHIND THE DOORS OF THIS TEMPLE LESS WEALTH ENOUGH TO BUY HIS WAY IN TO THE HORDES OF GENJIS--

MAYHAPS TO HIS VERY TABLE!

LIFE IS GOOD.

THAT SOUND?

LAUGHTER?

WHAT IS THIS!?

SLAMM

EH?

WE'LL ASK THE QUESTIONS YOU FOXY-FACED KHITAI PIG-DOG!

AYE! THAT WE WILL!

HMMM THAT ACCENT--

KRAK

I HAVE HEARD THIS BARBARIC ACCENT ONCE BEFORE

CHUNK

YOU ARE AQUILONIAN

FROM YOUR STENCH, I WOULD SURMISE THAT YOU ARE PART OF CONAN'S ROYAL SCOUTING PARTY

AM I CORRECT?

OF COURSE I AM

THIS IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE!

YOU WILL BRING A MESSAGE TO CONAN, YOUR BARBARIAN PIG OF A KING.

INFORM THE DOG-KING THAT I, LORD TSINJE-NUSHAN, HAVE HIS WORTHLESS PUP IN MY CUSTODY

I WILL EXPECT WORD FROM HIM WITHIN THREE DAYS HENCE--

--OR HIS SON, CONN, WILL DIE!

TWICE HAS THE SUN CROSSED THE SKY

IT IS A CRISP WINTER'S MORNING IN KHITAI

THE SOFT ENVELOPING LIGHT OF DAYBREAK BRINGS HOPE TO THE WEARY NOMADS AS THEY ARE LED SOUTHWARD THROUGH THE CLEAN WHITE COUNTRYSIDE.

THEY ARE **REFUGEES** ..CHASED FROM THEIR VILLAGES BY THE EVIL HORDES OF **GENJIS.**

THEY HAVE PLACED THEIR LIVES IN THE HANDS OF A MERE LAD.

THEY CALL HIM *KIRAKHAN, THE TIGER-LORD.*

KIRAKHAN! MY POOR EYES ARE **OLD,** YET I CAN HEAR THE APPROACH OF **RIDERS!** ARE THEY FRIENDS OR FOEMEN?

HA! DO NOT WORRY OLD ONE -- I RECOGNIZE THAT HARDY BAND OF RIDERS! 'TIS THE NOBLE LORD **TSINJE-NUSHAN,** AND HIS RETINUE!

"A WELCOME SIGHT FOR THESE WEARY EYES, I CAN TELL YOU! WE HAVE NAUGHT TO FEAR!"

NO! LORD TSINJE I BID YOU HAIL.

GREETINGS, OLD MAN!

THRESSH

:GGURRGGHLURG:

MITRA

THINK QUICKLY, KIRAKHAN!

--OR DO YOU PREFER TO BE CALLED CROWN PRINCE CONAN, THE SECOND?!

:UNNGGH:

WHA--? BUT HOW--

BHOSK! QUICKLY TO MY SIDE--

:TSK TSK: PRINCELING, YOUR HALF-WIT FRIEND CANNOT HELP YOU! HE IS PARALYZED WITH FEAR!

I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND TSINJE--YOU ARE A REBEL CHIEFTAIN-- WHERE IS YOUR HONOR?

WHAT OF THE CAUSE?

MY ONLY CAUSE IS *MYSELF*, WHELP!

BAP

THEN, PREPARE TO *DIE*!

CHAK

MAYHAPS LATER.

MY LIEGE, *HOW* DID YOU KNOW THE BARBARIAN WOULD BE TRAVELING THIS ROAD?

VERY SIMPLE, *KEHJE*--

A KING SUCH AS *CONAN* MUST PAY HIS SPIES WELL. CONAN'S SCOUTS WERE IN THE VILLAGE BECAUSE THEY *KNEW* THE PRINCE WOULD SOON ARRIVE.

I MERELY INTERRUPTED THE PRINCE EN ROUTE.

THE HORSEMEN RIDE FORTH, IGNORING THE GIANT BEHIND THEM. HE IS NO THREAT.

HE IS BHOSK, A GENTLE SIMPLETON. HE WATCHES AS HIS FRIEND IS CARRIED OFF--

HE FEELS *LOST* AND *AFRAID* IN A WORLD BEYOND HIS KEN--

--AND AS HE WRAPS HIMSELF IN HIS FRIEND'S CLOAK--HE KNOWS THAT HIS FRIEND HAS FELT THE SAME.

THE ENCAMPMENT OF TSINJE-KUSHAN.

I DEMAND TO KNOW WHY I AM BEING HELD CAPTIVE!

YOU DEMAND?

AHH, YOU ARE TRULY AMUSING--MY YOUNG BARBARIAN. YOUR INSOLENCE IS INCREDIBLE!

YOU THINK ME EVIL, EH? IS IT EVIL TO BEND WITH THE PREVAILING WINDS? IS IT EVIL TO PROTECT ONESELF?

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO THINK! I THOUGHT YOU TO BE A NOBLE MAN--BUT YOU ARE AS MUCH A SAVAGE AS MY FATHER!

AHHH YES, I SEE. YOUR FIGHT HAS NOT BEEN WITH GENJIS AT ALL. IT HAS BEEN WITH YOUR FATHER--

THIS KING CONAN SOUNDS INDEED LIKE A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART!

"HOW DISAPPOINTED HE MUST BE TO HAVE SIRED THE LIKES OF YOU!"

"WHAT WOULD HE SAY IF HE SAW YOU NOW?"

"WELL, THERE IS NO NEED TO WONDER, REALLY--HE WILL BE HERE AT ANY MOMENT TO COLLECT YOU--"

NO!

OUT OF MY WAY, SPAWN OF A SHE-DOG!

KRRRUASHH

CONN!

CONAN.

WHERE IS MY SON?

WHERE IS CONN!?

:GULP:

TO BE CONTINUED...